



the mulcahy scholarship

## THE MULCAHY SCHOLARSHIP NEWSLETTER

2024 EDITION



Our 2024 Mulcahy Scholarship Recipients at  
Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway.

*from left to right; Matthew Dolan, Ryan Scriven, Shannon Cole, Ciara Kelleher, Daniel O'Sullivan and Shane Deane*



## Note from the Board of Directors

Welcome to our 2024 Mulcahy Scholarship Newsletter! This year the scholarship was thrilled to select six wonderful recipients to travel to Ireland for two weeks this summer to partake in the Irish cultural program offered by the Celtic Irish American Academy (CIAA), in Galway.

Our Board of Directors were handed the arduous task of narrowing down the talented applicant pool, as the submissions were extremely strong again this year. It is heartening to know that the younger generation continues to offer a fresh perspective and holds immense potential to shape a prosperous future for us all, all while emulating the basis of the Mulcahy family way. Our recipients showed an abundance of leadership qualities, all while sharing an enthusiasm to explore their Irish heritage.

Our 2024 group consisted of Shannon Cole, Shane Deane, Matthew Dolan, Ciara Kelleher, Daniel O’Sullivan and Ryan Scriven. The group travelled from JFK to Shannon, Ireland on July 13, where they were met by representatives from the CIAA and transferred to their welcoming host families in Galway, where they lived for two weeks as part of the family.

Each day, the group attended classes at the CIAA, where they learned about their Irish heritage, Irish culture, some “gaelige”, as well as hurling skills, and they even sampled some Irish céilí dancing. They were also treated to numerous excursions organized by the CIAA, including a visit to the Cliffs of Moher, NUI Galway, Dáil Éireann in Dublin, Kylemore Abbey and a trek on Diamond Hill. The trip to the Dáil was very impactful, as the group were honored to meet with the current Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, Simon Harris. Each night, they got to relax with their host families and explore the sights of Galway, with the more adventurous folks diving from the tower at Blackrock in Salthill.

The Mulcahy Scholarship was launched in 2018 by the Aisling Irish Community Center, Yonkers, New York, in tribute to Denis and Miriam Mulcahy, and their family’s commitment to Project Children, a charity that for forty years, worked untiringly to change the lives of children across Northern Ireland. Project Children provided each child a 6-week summer reprieve from the violence of “the Troubles”. Nearly fifty years later, the scholarship is proud to replicate the reverse, by providing American high school students the opportunity to experience firsthand their Irish culture in a fun and diverse way. It is our way of thanking the 16,000 US host families for opening their doors, when the children of Northern Ireland needed them most. Our board are delighted with the growing interest in our scholarship program, and we will continue our endeavor to offer Irish American high school students the chance to explore their Irish heritage. We would like to extend our thanks to all our donors, as well as Brian Fahy and Johanna Clancy, Directors of the CIAA, and their host families.

Le buíochas,

MS Bord Stiúrthóirí 2024

# Shannon Cole

Long Island, NY



The Mulcahy Scholarship gave me the experience of a lifetime. I applied for the scholarship with the hopes of learning more about my Irish heritage and for the opportunity to experience Irish culture. Through this program I was given the opportunity to experience first-hand what it is like to culturally diverse myself in a place that wasn't home. Everyday there was a new lesson learned and a different activity to participate in. I would like to personally thank Denis Mulcahy, and everyone involved with Project Children and the Mulcahy Scholarship for allowing me to make memories, friends and life lessons I will value for the rest of my life.

This trip allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to the Mulcahy Scholarship and the CIAA. Whether I was exploring Galway City, taking classes at Saint Enda's College, spending the day in the city of Dublin or seeing the Cliffs of Moher; I was able to be myself, create amazing memories and grow as an individual. The host families were so welcoming and treated me like their own. At dinner, we always had fun stories to tell from that day. I woke up every morning excited for the agenda we had planned for the day.

One of my favorite memories from the trip was hiking up Diamond Hill as a group. The hike was challenging but once we reached the top of the mountain, the view made the struggle completely worth it. After the hike, we visited a farm belonging to a grandmother of one of the students of the CIAA. She opened her home to all forty students, and it really felt like home.

It is hard to put into words the impact this trip has had on me. If I could go back to Ireland and relive the two weeks I spent there, I would in a heartbeat. I was taught about my Irish heritage my whole life by my grandparents, but being able to experience and live it has changed my perspective in so many positive ways. I feel so lucky to have been chosen to represent the Mulcahy Scholarship and Project Children.

# Shane Deane

Woodside, NY



I would like to thank Denis Mulcahy, Linda Croston, Catherine Flood and everybody involved with the Mulcahy Scholarship Program for giving me the opportunity to be part of this wonderful two-week trip to Ireland.

My two-week adventure in Galway, Ireland was an unforgettable experience that opened my eyes to new cultures and perspectives. When we arrived in Shannon, we were met by the program director of Celtic Irish American Academy, Mr. Brian Fahy. After a two-hour bus ride to Galway, we were met by our host family. My host family was the Healy's, they treated us like their own three children, and they made us feel very welcome.

Most mornings we would either go to St. Enda's college to learn about Irish culture which included reading poems, knitting and Irish dancing and the old way of Irish life. In the evenings, we would go down to Salthill and enjoy the beach and jumping off Blackrock pier. We also went to the local GAA pitch. The group included students from the U.S, Spain, and France who shared stories of their own culture and experience. We explored historical sites in Galway, Dublin, and the Cliffs of Moher. One of our day trips was to Dublin where we went to Dáil Eireann (Ireland Government offices). We met the Taoiseach Simon Harris and had our photo taken with him. We had lunch in the Dáil restaurant. One of the other day trips was a long hike up Diamond Hill. Even though I have been to Ireland, I now have gained a deeper appreciation for my ancestors and their struggles, which has helped me better understand my own identity and roots. Meeting new people from different parts of the world was also a memorable part of the experience. Each person I met shared their unique culture and life experiences, broadening my perspective and inspiring me to consider new paths in life.

This trip has had a profound impact on me, inspiring me to pursue my goals with renewed passion and determination. The connections I made and the experiences I had in Galway will stay with me forever, shaping my future endeavors and helping me grow as a person. I am grateful for the opportunity to have had this enriching experience and I look forward to applying the lessons I learned to make a positive impact in the world. I really enjoyed my time in Galway and being part of this program and would encourage anyone to apply for the Mulcahy Scholarship for this great experience.

# Matthew Dolan

## Mohegan Lake, NY



The Mulcahy Scholarship provided me not only with many memories that I will hold and share forever, but with experiences that deeply contributed to my growth as a person. The Aisling Irish Community and Cultural Center, along with Project Children co-founder and chairman, Denis Mulcahy, gave me the chance to stay with a host family and take classes in Galway, Ireland, through a cultural exchange program (CIAA) over a two-week period.

At first, I was excited but nervous that I had received the scholarship because it meant that I would be meeting many new people far away from home. I soon realized that this trip was necessary because I would be facing a similar situation when moving away to college. Staying with my host family was great. I was welcomed right away, and I felt as though I had known the family members for a long time prior to meeting them. A substantial amount of free time was spent with them, whether it was playing soccer, watching a movie, or taking a walk along Galway Bay.

Every morning, all the students would make their way down to the school for class. We had lessons in Irish literature and history, which were very interesting, but often, we would take trips to the countryside or the city. The most memorable trip we took as a group was to the Cliffs of Moher. The views from the cliffs were truly breathtaking, and I will often think back to how I felt being there. We hiked up to the top of Diamond Hill, which was another trip we took to the countryside. Every step of the way up the mountain revealed an even greater view down the slope.

When I would arrive home, I received a delicious homemade meal that my host mother, Debbie, would make for us. We were given a level of independence that I greatly enjoyed. I made a few personal trips to places such as the Galway Aquarium, Galway Bay, and a few of the local stores. By the third day, we would spend almost all our time with the other students from the CIAA. We were exposed to the different lifestyles of students who lived in big cities and small towns, with people coming from places such as France, Spain, Chicago, and Boston. Despite us all coming from different areas, we all became very close, and most of us stayed in touch after the program through social media. There was an international art festival held in Galway city where I was able to see many different artists present their work. I was exposed to artwork and music from all over the world, and it broadened my understanding of not just Irish culture but cultures from all over the world.

I am very grateful to Project Children for sending me on this trip and the many interactions I had with new people and the new environment will be invaluable in getting me prepared to make the transition to college.

## Ciara Kelleher

Lynbrook, NY



Through my two weeks in Galway with the Mulcahy Scholarship, I was taught life lessons, met with amazing people, and lived an unforgettable experience. The trip itself is an opportunity wherein the students are invited to live with a host family, truly immersing themselves in Irish culture while being brought to some of the most famous and historic landmarks across the beautiful country. With around 40 students, coming from all around the United States, Spain, and France, it was like a melting pot of cultures all trying to adapt to one another. I have been so lucky to experience the city of Galway in such a unique way with people who I will forever cherish.

During these two weeks, there was something for everyone, that being arts, athletics, history, literature, etc. Some activities we took on were: going to art exhibits, learning how to play Gaelic football, visiting Medtronic (a global producer of medical devices,) taking a trip up to Dublin and being given a tour of Dáil Éireann swimming in Salthill, jumping off the Blackrock diving tower, going to top notch universities such as Trinity College and University of Galway, hiking up Diamond Hill, taking in the beautiful views at the Cliffs of Moher, and so much more.

Of course, all the activities were so much fun, but what fulfills that is the people I was surrounded by. All 40 students were kindhearted and open minded, but more importantly the organizers of the program care so much about every student. They want every pupil to have a great time, be safe, and learn as much as they can.

I am forever indebted to Denis Mulcahy and Project Children for allowing me to have this opportunity. From going into my interview in February, all the coordinators showed nothing but respect and kindness towards me. Growing up, I was always familiar with my Irish culture, but this trip taught me to appreciate and protect it. I noticed that appreciation build following the viewing of "How to Defuse a Bomb" documentary, seeing the brutality of The Troubles, as well as our morning classes in Galway learning about the Great Famine.

Upon coming home, I was excited to see my family and friends again, but still find myself looking back on pictures from Ireland and reminiscing with my newfound friends all thanks to the Mulcahy Scholarship. I would highly recommend applying for this scholarship no matter how out of your comfort zone it may seem. As we learned on the journey, which ended up being a common theme throughout the journey: you should learn to take the risk and reap the benefits rather than live never knowing what could've been.



## Daniel O'Sullivan

Norwood, NJ

My experience through the Mulcahy Scholarship has been one that I will remember forever. From the introductory event at Iona University where the six of the recipients got to meet and speak with each other before viewing the "How to Defuse a Bomb" Documentary, to traveling to Ireland, to learning more about Irish culture, the trip has far exceeded my expectations.

I am extremely appreciative of all the efforts that went into the organization of this trip. It was seamless from the moment we stepped into the airport until the moment we returned. One thing that I appreciated a lot about the trip was the host family aspect, whereas just as kids came from Ireland to stay with families in America, I was able to stay with a host family in Ireland that made me feel very welcome and at home.

Every day was something new, with notable trips to Dublin, the Cliffs of Moher, local farms, and Galway City, each of which I've had a great time in and learned a lot through exchanges with Irish people as well as landmarks and other historical sites. Along with all these experiences, I've met great friends that I plan on staying in contact with even after the trip and have each made the trip even more enjoyable. I enjoyed hanging out with all of them as we navigated all the fun events planned for us.

But what I found to be worth more than the excursions themselves was how much more connected I felt to my Irish roots. Had I not had the opportunity to receive the Mulcahy Scholarship, I likely wouldn't have been able to experience Irish culture in the way that I did.

I have only visited the counties my parents are from, Clare & Cork but through this scholarship, I was able to see much more of Ireland like Cliffs of Moher, Dail Eireann, Kinvarra and Dungaire Castles, as well as other sites you wouldn't stop to think about but have great historical significance, like the GPO in Dublin. Overall, I'm extremely grateful to Denis Mulcahy and all those that have made this trip possible, as it has made a profoundly positive impact on my life and provided me with experiences that I will never forget.



## Ryan Scriven

Stony Brook, NY

Earning the Mulcahy Scholarship truly prompted the experience of a lifetime. From the start traveling with the other 5 recipients, I had no idea what was to come, but soon enough we had all formed an unbreakable bond and experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

The first day we arrived, meeting our host family and getting the lay of the land took some getting used to, but everyone proved to be so welcoming and kind. By the third day I felt like I was a part of one big family made up of the 40 other kids attending the program. There were kids from all over America, Spain, Ireland, and France. I'm grateful to have engaged with all these people from very different cultures and walks of life, broadening my world view immensely. I can confidently say that I formed a close friendship with everyone and even intend on fulfilling a promise to visit my friends in Spain.

We had the opportunity to really explore Galway city and take in all it had to offer from its interesting history to its vibrant art scene. We also took excursions to places like the breathtaking cliffs of Moher and to Dublin where I was lucky enough to meet and converse with the Prime Minister! We saw beautiful castles and went on hikes with extraordinary views.

The trip also provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the complex history of Ireland itself. I now feel much more in touch with where I come from and my ancestors, understanding the hardships they endured and what it means to be of Irish descent. We had informative lessons on Irish literature and culture that were presented in an interactive way that made the lessons truly interesting and engaging. We got lectures from important figures in Academia including a top leader at UNESCO and I was introduced to career paths that I'm now considering taking up in the future.

The bonds I formed on the trip were ones that made leaving difficult, but I think it proves how wonderful and strong the connections I made were—I intend on staying in contact with everyone I met. Finally, I could not be more thankful for Project Children, and the facilitators of this scholarship who gave me an invaluable experience that I certainly won't ever forget.



**We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our program donors, and in particular:**

**The Michael J. Miller Foundation**

**Denis Jr. & Heidi Mulcahy**



Denis, Miriam, Denis Jr., Maureen and Tara Mulcahy with the 2024 Mulcahy Scholarship Recipients at the Scholarship Presentation Awards Night at Iona University, New Rochelle, NY.



Enjoying the Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare

A special visit to Dáil Éireann, Dublin and even got to meet the Taoiseach of Ireland, Simon Harris

